What is claimed is:

[Claim 1]    A method of managing the rights to digital

5    media containing a user agent in a network environment

comprising:

at initialization detecting network data packets

containing license number information of other such

digital media including programs running on the

10    network and;

when the detected license number is identical to that

being initialized preventing initialization continuing, or

when the detected license number is not identical to

that being initialized allowing digital media initialization

15    and then broadcasting the license number into the

network in a data packet.

[Claim 2]    A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the

digital media once initialized replicates onwards packets

from other instances of the digital media accessed or running elsewhere on the network.

[Claim 3]    A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the digital media is a program running on the network.

5   [Claim 4]    A method as claimed in claim 3 comprising:

when a packet containing a license number identical to that being initialized is received, broadcasting to the network a packet with a "halt" command, receiving the halt command in the computer with the duplicate

10    program running, and causing the program to terminate.

[Claim 5]    A method of generating a license number for digital media as claimed in claim 1 consisting of:

generating a unique license code

15    generating from the license code a verification code and concatenating this to the license code

encrypting the concatenated code and dispersing it with the digital media.

[Claim 6]     A method as claimed in claim 5 consisting of generating a user code from the encrypted code.

[Claim 7]     A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the user agent is embedded in a multimedia file or disc.

5   [Claim 8]     A computer when running a user agent of digital media such as a program, which user agent on initialization recognizes other instances of the digital media on the network, a comparator which compares the license code of other instances of the digital media on the network

10  with the license code of the initializing version, an initialization invocation which initializes the digital media and broadcasts the digital media license code if the license code is not found and a detector which detects a positive comparison and prevents initialization of the digital media

15  when an identical license code is found.

[Claim 9]     A computer as claimed in claim 8 wherein the comparator may also detect a "halt" instruction from an initialization invocation on a computer which is using an identical license number.

[Claim 10]     A computer as claimed in claim 8 wherein on detection by the detector of a positive comparison, a network interface broadcasts a "halt" indication to the originating user agent.

5    [Claim 11]     A computer as claimed in claim 8 wherein the user agent is invoked from a multimedia disc or file.